



# DMS Newsflash

S e p t e m b e r 2 0 2 0

## Managing Distance Learning Days

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year! We are excited to have students back in the building and will remain extremely diligent to provide a safe and optimal learning environment for your child. As part of keeping our building safe from the spread of virus, our district has adopted a Hybrid Learning Model where students have a mixture of in-person and distance learning days. In addition to the hybrid model, some families have opted to have their child(ren) learn in a complete distance learning format for the time being. To help you manage distance learning days for your child, we wanted to give you an overview of how the days work and best practices.

### Sample of Distance Learning Day

(*Schedule may vary based off grade level and Specials)	
9:00	Log onto Chromebook
9:10-9:25	Morning Meeting/Community Building/Attendance-LIVE SESSION *Purpose of this time is to build community with an emphasis on social-emotional learning
9:25-9:50	Join Whole Group ELA or Math-LIVE SESSION
9:50-10:00	Suggested Movement Break. For example, quick walk, play in the backyard
10:00-10:45	ELA or Math Rotations-Independent. Computer Based or Paper/Pencil Activity.
10:45-10:55	Suggested Movement Break
10:55-11:15	"Catch Up" Time or Social Studies/Science Activity-Independent If done with work, read a book or work on math facts.
11:15-11:45	YouBlock activities (as needed): word building/fluency, math activities-Independent *Students who receive RTI support may receive small group LIVE instruction as the year progresses
11:45-12:00	Suggested Movement Break
12:00-12:30	LUNCH
12:40-1:00	Join Whole Group ELA or Math-LIVE SESSION
1:05-1:25	Math or ELA Rotations-Independent
1:25-1:35	Suggested Movement Break
1:35-2:25	Specials (*1 special for 5 weeks)-Independent
2:25-2:40	Movement Break
2:40-3:00	Math or ELA Rotation-Independent
3:00-3:20	ELA or Math Catch-up-Independent

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We respect some of the challenges that families or caretakers may face on At-Home Learning Days. To balance out requirements to meet CT attendance and academic guidelines, we are requiring students to participate LIVE in a morning meeting session (15 minutes) which will continue into their first LIVE academic session of the day (approx. 25 minutes) for ELA Whole Group or Math Whole Group, and a 25-minute afternoon LIVE session for either ELA Whole Group or Math Whole Group. Students are then required to complete approximately two independent activities in both ELA and Math, a Special Area activity daily, and an additional Science/Social Studies activity once a week. Families have some flexibility with independent learning times and when they are completing their independent work outside the LIVE Meet sessions. However, students are expected to complete ALL assignments before the start of the next school day to ensure they do not fall behind the rest of the class.

**This year, homework will be very limited. We ask that nightly all students/families do the following things as their homework:**

- 🍏 Review SeeSaw/Google Classroom accounts to make sure all work was submitted
- 🍏 Complete any See Saw/Google Classroom assignments that were not completed during the day (if any)
- 🍏 Charge Chromebook
- 🍏 Other Homework Assignments as assigned by teachers may include nightly reading, practice sight words, math facts, and on occasion other activities.

**Other helpful hints to help your child be most successful on Distance Learning Days:**

- 🍏 Set up a quiet, clutter free work space that minimizes distractions for your child
- 🍏 Purchase your child headphones/earbuds to block out outside noise
- 🍏 Create a routine for your child that mirrors a school day.
- 🍏 Communicate with your child’s teacher and school staff in regards to any questions or concerns you may have.
- 🍏 Ensure your child utilizes movement breaks
- 🍏 Have your child log in to LIVE meetings on time
- 🍏 Make sure your child is dressed appropriately and ready for learning
- 🍏 Provide your child with a nourishing breakfast, snack, and lunch.

\*If you need assistance in this area, SPS Food Services is providing meals.

We appreciate your support and collaboration to provide the most ideal learning environment possible for your child. Please continue to communicate with your child’s teacher and us about any specific needs. Let’s make 2020-2021 a great year of learning and growth at Deans Mill School!

Sincerely,  
Jenn & Tom



## Important Dates



### September

### October

- 15 Virtual PTO Meeting • 6:30 PM
- 17 PTO Mums Fundraiser • Orders Due
- 18-24 PTO Mums Pick Up @ Pequot Plant Farm
- 24 Virtual Back to School Night • 5:30-7:30 PM
- 30 No School • Professional Learning Day

- 8 Board of Education Meeting • District Office • 7 PM
- 12 No School • Columbus Day Observance
- 21-22 Early Release for Conferences • 12:10 PM

# Back-to-School night



**More information will be sent out prior to Back-to-School Night**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**DEANS MILL SCHOOL**  
**"Virtual" Back to School Night**  
**THURSDAY,**  
**SEPTEMBER 24, 2020**  
**5:30 – 7:30 PM**

## Spirit Days 2020-21



September 23 Wear DMS apparel or green and write to show your school spirit! 

October 28 Mismatch Day • Wear clothes that don't match! 

November 25 Stonington Day • Wear Stonington apparel or brown and white. 

December 23 Holiday Cheer • Wear your favorite holiday clothing. 

January 27 Crazy Sock Day 

February 24 Sports Day • Wear clothing or a jersey from your favorite sports team. 

March 3 Wear a shirt with words 

March 22 Wear Yellow to support Down Syndrome Awareness 

April 1 Wear Blue to support Autism Awareness 

April 21 Crazy Hair Day 

May 26 Patriotic Day • Wear Red, White, & Blue to celebrate the USA. 

## Physicals

For those children who have **physicals that are due after the start of school, they need to be scheduled now to avoid delay.** We request that you notify us of the date that your appointment has been scheduled as soon as possible. Once completed, physical paperwork must be brought into the nurse **by the due date** in order for your child to remain compliant to be in school.

## Medications

Students requiring medication at school must have a medication order signed by parent/guardian and health care provider for each school year. An adult will need to bring the medication to the school nurse in original packaging with pharmacy labels attached. Medications may not be sent in with the student.

## Illnesses and Injuries

Please remember to screen your child before sending him or her to school. When you are in doubt whether or not to send your child to school, the answer is most likely to keep your child home. For information and guidelines on keeping your child home from school, please refer to the [SPS Rules & Regulations for Control of Communicable Disease](#). This information may also be accessed on the Deans Mill School Website under Parents/Nurse-Notes.

## Absences

It is understandable that not all illnesses and injuries need to be seen by a doctor. However, if your child is seen by a medical provider, please obtain a doctor's note and provide it to the school nurse to avoid absences becoming an attendance problem.

## Physical Education Excuse

If your child has an illness or injury and is not able to participate in PE class, a parent may send in a note to the school nurse requesting that the child not participate for one day only.

If longer than one day is needed, a doctor's note is required. Students who are not able to participate in PE class are not able to participate in physical play during recess.

## Flu shots

Although not required for K-5, flu shots are recommended.

## Contact the school nurse

Please contact the nurse with any updates on medical conditions regarding illness, injuries, or any other questions or concerns! She always welcomes a heads up in the event that your child comes to see the nurse throughout the day. You may email her at [DMSnurse@stonington-schools.org](mailto:DMSnurse@stonington-schools.org) or you may call the front office and ask to speak directly to the nurse.

Nurse Lori • Lori Tavares, BSN, RN  
[DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org)

# Food Services Update

Dear SPS Families & Students,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year! Stonington Public Schools participates in the National School Breakfast (NSB) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Our program offers meals in the building and we will be providing pick-up meals for hybrid learning days as well as for all distance learners and meals requirement payment.

**At this time, all Stonington students will have access to breakfast and lunch at no cost to families!** USDA has approved funding through December 31, 2020 to pay for reimbursable meals for our in school hybrid and distance learners. However, if your child brings lunch from home milk is \$0.50. Starting in October, we will also begin to sell limited à la carte items. Please see below for payment methods.

## **Payment Methods:**

1. Cash in an envelope with your child's full name or 4-digit PIN.
2. Check made out to SPS Food Services with child's full name or 4-digit PIN on the "Memo" line.
3. Online payments using EZ-Pay, [www.spsezpay.com/stonington](http://www.spsezpay.com/stonington). You will need your child's student 7 or 8-ID number to set this up. This information can be obtained from the front office or feel free to contact me directly
4. Any unused balances will carry over to the following school year or may be transferred into a different account at the parent/guardian's request.

## **Meal Options**

Under guidance of USDA and the CT Child Nutrition Department, we will be distributing meals for both hybrid and distance learners in addition to providing meals in the building.

1. We will offer hot meals on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday to the students in each building.
2. Hybrid learners are eligible for 3 breakfasts and lunches for their at-home learning days.
  - a. **Meals may only be picked up by a parent or guardian.**
  - b. Cohort A students (in building Monday & Tuesday) can pick up meals at SHS on Wednesdays from 8-9:30 AM. High school students who will be driving to pick up their meals will have an excused absence.
  - c. Meals must be pre-ordered via Google document no later than 9 AM on Tuesdays.
  - d. Cohort B students (in building Thursday & Friday) can pick up meals at SHS on Mondays from 8-9:30 AM. High school students who will be driving to pick up their meals will be able to do so during Task block.
  - e. Meals must be pre-ordered via Google document no later than 9 AM on Fridays.
3. Distance learners are eligible for 5 breakfasts and lunches.
  - a. **Meals may only be picked up by a parent or guardian.**
  - b. Pick up will be held at SHS on Mondays from 8-9:30 AM
  - c. Meals must be pre-ordered via Google document no later than 9 AM on Wednesdays.

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4. For the first week of school only, we had 1-day and 3-day meal pick up.

5. The link for online meal ordering is <https://forms.gle/e7ZZa5j6R7UXg7tp8>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time with questions or concerns.

Thank you for supporting our school meals program and here's to a nutritious year!

With highest regard,

Becky Fowler, MS, RDN, CDN

Director of Food Services

[Becky.fowler@stonington-schools.org](mailto:Becky.fowler@stonington-schools.org)

(860) 572-0506 ext 2122

***Stonington Public Schools Food Services is thrilled to announce:***  
**FREE BREAKFAST & LUNCH FOR ALL STUDENTS!!!**

USDA has approved funding to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students, including in person, at-home hybrid, and distance learners. Free meals will last through December 31, 2020 or until funds run out (whichever comes first).

**FAQ's Answered**

- When students are in the building, no need to preorder meals! They are welcome to come for breakfast or lunch in the cafeteria.
- Online ordering for at-home hybrid days or distance learners is necessary. The order form link is <https://forms.gle/z9WAHjhbT9ZYEutE8>
- Distance Learners & Cohort B students pick up Mondays, SHS, 8-9:30 am
- Cohort A students pick up Wednesdays, SHS, 8-9:30 am
- Please place pick up meal orders weekly
- Money is still required when students purchase only milk in school (\$0.50) or any a la carte items.
- Free/reduced meal application submission is still recommended to cover meal costs when USDA funding ends

For further questions, please visit

<https://www.stoningtonschools.org/departments/food-services> or email

[becky.fowler@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:becky.fowler@stoningtonschools.org)

# Mental Health Notes

Welcome back families!

We are so excited to welcome students and staff back into the building and virtually for the 2020-2021 school year. We recognize that there will be many changes this year, but know that we have a strong, resilient community here at DMS. This year we are excited that Nora Selinger will be joining the DMS Mental Health team beginning in December.

## DMS Mental Health Team

### Alexis Moniz

Alexis has a Masters degree in Educational Counseling and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in School Psychology, from Rhode Island College. This is the start of her 7<sup>th</sup> year at DMS. She enjoys all the facets of her role, especially the rewarding moments of student success. In addition to her time at DMS, she will be teaching graduate students at Rhode Island College about the importance of consultation as a school psychologist. Outside of school, Alexis enjoys spending time hiking and skiing with her family and friends.

### Kara Robenhymer

Kara is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst with degrees from the University of Rhode Island and the University of St. Joseph. She will be starting her 10<sup>th</sup> year here at DMS and loves the range of activities she is able to engage in as she supports students and families. When Kara is not at work, she may be found running after her two sons and spending time with her husband. She enjoys dancing, crafting, and trying new things.

### Nora Selinger

Nora will be working this year at DMS and will continue to work as the 6<sup>th</sup> grade school guidance counselor at SMS. She earned her B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies from UConn and her M.S. in School and Professional Counseling. Nora has worked as a school guidance counselor for ten years and as a professional counselor for several years. She is excited about joining the DMS mental health team! During her personal time, Nora enjoys spending time with her two-year-old son, newborn daughter, husband, and extended family. She is an avid tennis player, skier, and runner.

## Mental Health Team Contact Information:

**Phone:**

860--535-2235

**Email:**

[alexis.moniz@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:alexis.moniz@stoningtonschools.org)

[kara.robenhymer@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:kara.robenhymer@stoningtonschools.org)

[nora.selinger@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:nora.selinger@stoningtonschools.org)

We hope that you have a spectacular September!

Ms. M(oniz), Mrs. R(obenhymer), & Ms. Selinger



# Specials Update

Our goal for the year is to keep families informed about grade level curriculum in Music, Art, Library, and Physical Education and how they can support their children at home.

We are happy to be back at school and enjoy seeing your children again! Your child will have one special per cycle. The schedule for specials through 10/9/20 is as follows:

	<b>Library</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>K</b>	Hetu	Lettiero	Romano	Wade
<b>1</b>	Mellow	Watson	McKee	Rovella/Sartor
<b>2</b>	Bocian	Diana	Discordia	Wilkins
<b>3</b>	Whipple	O'Lari	Gill	Rogers
<b>4</b>	Morehouse	Pescatello	Scrimgeour	Durham
<b>5</b>	Salsich	Volpe	Barth	Lance

Remember to check your child's Seesaw (grades K-2) and Google Classroom (grades 3-5) account for weekly assignments, as well as their school email.

If you have any questions, please contact us:  
[kirsten.anderson@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:kirsten.anderson@stoningtonschools.org) (Library)  
[hillary.biernacki@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:hillary.biernacki@stoningtonschools.org) (Art)  
[emily.mcminn@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:emily.mcminn@stoningtonschools.org) (Music)  
[cyndi.lapalme@stoningtonschools.org](mailto:cyndi.lapalme@stoningtonschools.org) (PE)

**Art** **Music** **Library** **Physical Education**  
*Miss Biernacki* *Mrs. McMinn* *Mrs. Anderson-Halbert* *Mrs. LaPalme*







### Getting to know

## Ms. Sartor

### First Grade Teacher

My name is Megan Sartor. I am so excited to be joining the Deans Mill School community as a long-term substitute in grade one, and have been very busy preparing for this special school year. I graduated from Stonington High School and went on to attend Eastern Connecticut State University, where I attained a Bachelor's in Spanish, as well as a Masters and teaching certification in Early Childhood Education. I enjoy going to the beach and spending time with my family and friends on the weekend. I have spent time working at the Stonington Como as a referee and mentor in youth basketball, as well as volunteered at St Patrick's Church in Mystic. I am most looking forward to learning from my colleagues and building relationships with the students and families at Deans Mill School this year.



MEGAN SARTOR

### Getting to know

## Ms. Padula

### Floating Substitute Teacher

I am Lori Padula and will be serving as a building substitute at DMS! I graduated URI with my B.A. in Elementary Education In 2005, and earned my B.A. in Psychology in 2004. I hold an elementary teaching certificate in Rhode Island. I discovered last year that I love and adore the Stonington Public School system and the warm, friendly, and professional nature of everyone I meet here. When I am not working at the school, I can be found in my garden, cooking or baking, reading, or playing with my fun-loving cats. I spend as much time with my young adult children and a few close friends as I can. I also enjoy working at my part-time jobs at a local arts & crafts retail store and gift shop. I am looking forward to an exciting, dynamic year at DMS, and am eager to serve the district and work with all of the super professional people and students here!



LORI PADULA

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**Getting to know**

**Ms. Cabuhat**

**Paraprofessional**

Hafa Adai! My name is Donnica Cabuhat. I was born and raised on the beautiful island of Guahan and recently moved here in Connecticut, which is equally as breathtaking. I obtained a BA in Psychology and through my major gained a passion for working with children. During my free time, I enjoy hiking, singing, and hanging out with my Flemish rabbit, Milo. I am so excited to work with such tenacious, collaborative individuals here at DMS and I look forward to bringing inspiration and happiness into the students' lives.



DONNA CABUHAT

**Getting to know**

**Mr. Smith**

**Paraprofessional**

Hi, my name is Owen Smith. My background is in Arts Management, I just graduated from Western CT State University in May. I live in Pawcatuck with my family and our two dogs, Teddy and Chris! I am super excited to meet the students I get to work with at DMS this year!



OWEN SMITH

**Getting to know**

**Mr. Tobin**

**Paraprofessional**

Hello everyone! My name is Andrew Tobin and I grew up here in Mystic, CT. I have a bachelor's degree in social work and am currently in school working on my master's degree in social work. During the spring, summer, and fall months, I enjoy playing tennis, running, and walking with my dog Monty around Mystic. During the winter months, I spend most weekends skiing at Okemo Mountain in Ludlow, VT. I am really looking forward to having a fun and productive school year working at Deans Mill School!



ANDREW TOBIN

CONTINUED

Getting to know

# Ms. Worthington

Paraprofessional



My name is Kearney Worthington. I am from Manchester, CT, but now live in Stonington. I graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA with a BA in psychology and studio art. I spend my free time reading, drawing, and playing rugby in New Haven, CT.



KEARNEY WORTHINGTON

## PTO News

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Deans Mill School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) would like to welcome you back to a new and exciting year. While the beginning of this year looks a bit different than it has in years past, we will need parent and family support now more than ever. We will be starting off our year selling Mums from Pequot Plant Farm in September and our official DMS Apparel in October.

Our PTO raises funds and sponsors many events that go on throughout the school year. We are here from kindergarten orientation, until the last day of school. We support our teachers with funds for the classrooms and fund many of the field trips. We are looking forward to the potential of some exciting, new virtual field trips this year. The PTO also supports Cultural Enrichment, Science and Technology Day, and the Book Fairs just to name a few favorites.

We are always looking for volunteers for special events and fundraisers. Look out for Signup Genius emails throughout the year to get involved. We will be holding bi-monthly meetings via Zoom the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every other month at 6:30 PM. We are always looking for new faces with new ideas. By being a parent/guardian with a student at DMS, you are already part of the PTO, and there is no sign-up needed to attend. Feel free to join one or all the meetings.

We welcome you to attend our first PTO meeting of the year on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:30 PM via Zoom! Check your email for the Zoom invite.

We look forward to a great 2020-2021 school year!



Katie Quinlan  
PTO President  
quinlanpto@gmail.com

## DEANS MILL SCHOOL PTO



**Decorate your home for Fall  
with beautiful mums  
from Pequot Plant Farm!**

Mums cost \$7 each, come in 9" pots,  
and are available in  
RED, WHITE, BRONZE, PURPLE and YELLOW.  
Additional colors and combos are available —  
pick them on the spot. But first come, first serve!

<b>TOTAL MUMS:</b> <b>X</b> <b>\$7</b> <b>=</b> <b>TOTAL ENCLOSED:</b>
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form with CHECK PAYABLE TO DMS PTO**  
**Orders are due by 9/17 and will be ready for pickup 9/18 through 9/25.**

Questions? Please call Tracey Strelczuk at (860) 460-5997 or email [traceynied@hotmail.com](mailto:traceynied@hotmail.com)  
All proceeds benefit the DMS PTO. Thank you for supporting Deans Mill School PTO.